

April 27, 2012

62 organizations partner to provide services to community members in need

Edmonton, AB – On Sunday, 62 community organizations will come together for the eighth Homeless Connect Edmonton. Hosted at the Shaw Conference Centre, the event provides free services to those who are homeless or at-risk-of-becoming-homeless. Homeless Connect serves over 1,700 guests, made possible by the involvement of more than 60 service providers, 400 community volunteers and 20 sponsors.

Organizations such as Pearle Vision, who provide free eye exams and referrals; Coinomatic, who donate laundry services and equipment and Shaw Cable, who provide free long distance calling and internet access, have supported the event since its inception in October 2008. Other services provided to guests include haircuts, dentistry, counseling, pre-natal support, foot care and a hot meal.

Homeward Trust coordinates Homeless Connect through collaboration with Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, Shaw Conference Centre, the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region and over 24 community leaders representing various sector organizations and agencies.

"Homeless Connect has grown into an extremely successful event," says Susan McGee, executive director, Homeward Trust Edmonton. "When we hear that a guest has received a full time job after visiting a service such as Prime Staffing, it reinforces the purpose behind this event."

Hosting two Homeless Connect events each year, the Shaw Conference Centre contributes over \$83,000 annually in facility services, including in-house event services contributions of over \$20,000.

"The Shaw Conference Centre is proud to support such an important event as Homeless Connect," said Cliff Higuchi, vice president and general manager, Shaw Conference Centre. "This event is a community success story, and has helped thousands of Edmontonians connect with the services they need."

In addition to accessing 60+ services, every guest leaves with a care kit, packaged and distributed by the United Way In-Kind Centre, containing essential items such as toothpaste, shampoo, soap and deodorant. The cost of the care kits is sponsored by Parlee Mclaws.

"Homeless Connect is a testament to the results achieved when a community works together," said Anne Smith, President and CEO, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. "We are proud to lend our support and be part of this collective effort to help address the many challenges related to homelessness, and work toward changing the lives of individuals and families in our community."

Since the event began, more than 2,800 volunteers and 420 service providers have delivered services to more than 10,900 homeless and those at-risk-of-becoming-homeless through Homeless Connect Edmonton.

Learn more about Homeless Connect Edmonton at www.homelessconnect.ca

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Homeless Connect Edmonton is organized by volunteer committees that provide direction and support for the event. Homeward Trust Edmonton, a not-for-profit organization providing leadership and resources towards ending homelessness, coordinates the overall work plan and ensures the event aligns with related Edmonton initiatives.